



Focus on Floradale

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Floradale Mennonite Church

December, 2016

Floradale's first Worship Café



Floradale Mennonite Church held its first Worship Café in the foyer on Nov. 6. Organized by Nichelle Bauman, the worship band led with lots of music. From left: Richard Bauman, Alina Kehl, Jamie Gingrich, Dane Frede, Ryan Bauman, Jeanette Towns and Nichelle.

People were encouraged to enjoy sweet desserts or fruit along with their coffee during the informal worship. Katie Gerber, who leads our youth ministry, also participated with a meditation. It was a great evening; thank you to Nichelle and the band.

Greg McCorquodale ran the laptop and projector during the Worship Café. A large screen was borrowed from another church so the words of the songs and the scripture texts could be displayed for all to see.

Meet Johnny Friesen

For those of you who I have not yet met, my name is Johnny Friesen. I am the middle son of Jim and Joanne and I have an older sister named Katie. She is a school teacher in Grimsby and married to James Tulloch. (I'm also the proud uncle of their son Wesley). I also have a younger brother named Robbie who is currently studying theology at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg.

I grew up in the town of Grimsby, nestled in between Hamilton and St. Catharines in the Niagara region. I went to high school at Eden Secondary in St. Catharines, which is a public school with Mennonite Brethren roots. I attended the First Mennonite Church in Vineland, on a regular basis and was baptized in 2011 after returning home for my first summer after university.

I graduated from the University of Waterloo in April 2015, with a degree in Environment and Resource Studies. I had back surgery in the summer after graduation to repair a herniated disc and nerve impingement. After recovering from this surgery enough to return to work, I took a job as a butcher at Conestoga Meat Packers. After about seven months and an amputated (then reattached) finger, I took a job working for Rothsay as an operator in their plant in July. This job is essentially (without getting into serious detail about why it smells so bad) recycling waste animal protein through industrial scale processing. I am currently in charge of running one of two EquaCookor systems, which turns waste poultry into protein

powder for pet food or animal feed.

I moved to Floradale from Kitchener after driving through the small town on my way home from work, and saw an apartment for rent sign. Which, coincidentally, is how I stumbled upon Floradale Mennonite Church as well.

In my spare time I enjoy playing sports, fishing, canning, hiking and playing board/card games. I passionately cheer for the Blue Jays and Maple Leafs and not quite as passionately for the Raptors and Bills.

I enjoy playing music and play both drums and guitar, and I would like to learn the harmonica. I also enjoy attending concerts of the country music genre.

I have worked many different jobs over the years including: on the Thiessen Farm in Jordan, Zamboni driver, hockey referee, baseball umpire, forklift driver, wastewater sampler, league convenor, dishwasher, parking attendant, stockboy, paperboy and Lavage technician.

I appreciate everybody's warm welcome to your church family, and I hope to get a chance to meet more of you soon. FMC has made starting a life in a new place a very easy transition for me, and I am thankful to all of you for that! Feel free to ask me any questions about the anecdotes above, or to talk sports or anything else we may have in common!

Peace,
Johnny Friesen



Participating in the Paralympics

Our Gear.....



On Sunday, Nov. 27, Sheila Forler Bauman talked about her experience in working as the Physiotherapist for the Canadian women's wheelchair basketball team that participated in the Paralympics in Rio, Brazil, this summer.

Among her slides was a photo of the suitcase with clothing provided for each of the team members. Sheila also wore the team jacket to do her presentation.

Fanosie Legesse visits Floradale

“Your Father’s business is growing,” said Fanosie Legesse on Sunday Nov. 6. He pointed out that it was churches like Floradale who supported the first missionaries to Ethiopia 70 years ago and now the Mennonite-affiliated church there has grown to over 400,000 believers. Fanosie is the pastor at Zion Mennonite Fellowship in Elmira and he spoke to an adult Sunday school class and did a Moment in Mission during the worship service.

Fanosie grew up in a rural village in Ethiopia. When he came out of high school, he began working as a pastor. He was challenged by the questions of the congregation and when he was given the opportunity to attend Meserete Kristos College for 10 months, he was thrilled to take the opportunity to study at this church college. It was due to the generous support of Mennonite churches in North America that this education was offered to Ethiopian pastors.

At the end of the semester, Fanosie was offered a scholarship to complete a 4-year degree. He was very anxious to accept, but wondered if the leaders of his congregation would agree. Fanosie dove into his studies but it was very challenging because he didn’t have a good command of English when he began. He enjoyed studying Anabaptist theology and on weekends he returned to his church to teach his people about what he was learning.

Not long after he graduated he said “a Canadian snatched



him out of Ethiopia” and now he is a pastor in MCEC. I assume he means it was his wife, Dianne Dobbie, who grew up in Fergus and attended Bethel Mennonite Church who did the snatching.

“I am a witness of what your money and your prayers are doing,” said Fanosie about the support that Canadian Mennonites have given to the ministry of Meserete Kristos College. He also said that when he was growing up, his world was his village and he didn’t know much about what was happening in the rest of the world. That has changed he said. Today everyone has a cell phone and Facebook has come to even remote parts of Ethiopia. Even the shoe polishers have cell phones. “We are now a global church,” he said.

Today the Meserte Kristos church in Ethiopia is growing by 19,000 a year. Fanosie is excited about that growth, saying that the gospel makes sense to the people there. The challenge is that they are constantly needing more leaders who require good train-

ing. He believes that the MK college is doing very well. He said it is more influential than other universities in Ethiopia. The graduates are finding employment beyond the church and are sometimes pursued by organizations such as World Vision. Meanwhile there aren’t enough graduates for all the churches.

By supporting Meserete Kristos College “we are participating in God’s work,” said Fanosie.

Christmas gift to Ethiopian pastor

On Sun. Nov. 6, the day Fanosie Legesse was visiting, Leon Kehl asked the children to collect pocket change from the congregation so that we could give a gift to an Ethiopian pastor who attends Meserete Kristos College. The pastor lives a distance from the college and can’t afford to travel home to visit his wife and children. The \$200 we collected will enable this pastor to travel home for Christmas.



Update from Angela and Noah Ishaka

Noah arrived in Flin Flon on August 4. Angela followed with the kids on August 12. The trip went extremely well, thanks to so many at Floradale who put together care packages for us to make the journey more manageable. Also, Angela's Mom, Geraldine, travelled with them which made a trip with three young children much easier. We made it to Terrace Bay the first day (about 13 hours of driving) and then slept in Winnipeg the next night. We also stopped in Thunder Bay for lunch on the second day at my friend Karen's house. She is a Weber (daughter of Noah and Pauline) who married someone from Thunder Bay (Michael Long). Anyhow, each day we could drive fewer hours so that helped a lot as well.

The weather was lovely when we arrived and there are four different beaches that are really close to Flin Flon. We swam a lot in August but by September the weather turned a bit too cool for that. There are some lovely trails around the lakes right in the town so we did some hiking before the SNOW came. And it came with a vengeance just before Thanksgiving weekend. We had between 40 and 50 cm of snow over three days, and we actually had a snow day, and apparently there have been zero snow days here in over 24 years. The snow has not yet melted but the temperature is supposed to be between 4 and 6 degrees for the next few days so hopefully some of it will go away before winter is here for good.



Angela and Noah

Noah has a class of Gr. 3 French Immersion students. He teaches them all the core subjects, and he enjoys having his own classroom very much. The school is well equipped and has just over 300 students. The French program was initiated in 1982, and has grown more popular in recent years so now about a third of the students at the school are in the Immersion program. He has 5 students in his class that have some serious behaviour issues which makes it a challenge, but he is up for it. He travelled to Winnipeg twice already for teacher conferences which help give him ideas for dealing with these issues.

Angela has jumped into the music community with characteristic enthusiasm. She joined the community choir, and was

asked to join a chamber choir as well which participates in a "Lessons and Carols" service at the Lutheran church, as well as a few other concerts over the year. The community will be putting on the musical "Grease" in the spring, but Angela won't likely have time to be involved with that. There is a venue that hosts local talent periodically called "Johnny's Social Club" and she will likely sing some folk and pop music there at some point this year. She also has taken on eight private music students.

Elijah and Safi go to the nursery school each day for half a day. This program helps give them some structure to their day, and helps Angela to have some time to focus on Jesse, to get things done around the house, and to have a little break now and then. The kids love the school, and Jesse is also looking forward to being able to go. He never wants to leave when we drop off and pick up the older kids.

Elijah is doing really well and learning to play gently with other kids; Safi is making lots of friends, and Jesse is starting to talk more and more now. Safi is blessed to have a neighbour girl who is four years old. They get along very well and often play with each other at home. Elijah doesn't have any friends who live so close, but he is making connections at school and at swimming, including a little boy who is the same age and has a Canadian Mom and a Jamaican Dad. They are so cute hanging out together.



Elijah and Safi

Our family is attending “Cornerstone Community Church” which is part of the Mennonite Brethren denomination. Our pastor, Randall Krahn, is such a lovely man who is caring on a per-

sonal level, and delivers challenging sermons without being judgmental. The congregation is small, but very close and committed. Our next-door-neighbours also attend this church and they have been so helpful in getting us settled in the town and by introducing us to lots of people. The pastor’s wife, Faith, is also lovely and she and Angela are developing a close friendship based on music and a lot of other mutual interests, and a similar approach to life. We feel so blessed to have found this church. Angela has been playing piano and guitar quite a bit, and will lead worship soon for the first time.

We are still renting a house and eventually will be faced with the decision of whether to buy or keep renting. It is actually much cheaper to buy in the short term, but there has been a lot of talk of the mine shutting down which means re-selling houses won’t be easy. However, I just heard today that they have found another large ore body so I’m sure spirits will be up in the community, and the fu-



Jesse

ture of the town remains intact for now.

Thank you for praying for us during this transition. We are really enjoying it a lot and it has not been a traumatic experience for any of us (other than the advent of winter in early October!).

We are planning to come home for the Christmas break so we hope to see some of you then. Many blessings to you all.

With love from *Noah, Angela, Elijah, Safi & Jesse*



Coming to Floradale Mennonite Church

Sat. June 17, 2017 afternoon and evening

Theatre of the Beat will present

Yellow Bellies: An Alternative History of WWII

Yellow Bellies is an historical drama that highlights the experiences and public response to Mennonite Conscientious Objectors during WWII. This episodic tale takes audiences across Canada, featuring verbatim interviews, fictionalized scenes, and live music from an often overlooked chapter of Canadian history. Perhaps you have a relative who served at Montreal River or one of the other CO camps in Canada.

Written by Johnny Wideman and Rebecca Steiner

Update from Stefan Cherry

For the past eight years my wife Pascale and I devoted ourselves to planting a church called The Village, located in a formerly pretty rough neighbourhood in Vanier, near downtown Ottawa. It has been a joy to be a part of church planting and community/ neighbourhood development and during these past eight years we saw God work in some wonderful ways. This past year we felt it was time for a change—that God was leading us into a new season of ministry, so we've now handed leadership of The Village over to the denomination and are eager to see it continue to grow.

Not only did we feel God leading us into something new, it was also into a new way of life. So, after eight years of inner-city living, this past June we moved our family to a small 5-acre farm east of Ottawa and are enjoying these new challenges. The other new change is that I've recently been asked to join the staff of The Navigators of Canada, an interdenominational Christian ministry focusing on discipleship.

I've had experience over the years working internationally and in the inner-city, helping disciple and mentor people in various ways. This is the area that I am very excited about—to mentor young adults from the university campus, and combine that with discipling people living on the margins of society. Building bridges between these two groups of people is one I am also going to be pursuing—to see



Stefan, Malaika, Elijah and Pascale

God at work in these different segments of society.

My initial focus will be working with the local Navigators staff, to begin equipping a group of young adults in the area of missions. I'll be plugging the students into one of the many service opportunities that exist around the City of Ottawa. After that, we'll take them to an inner-city church in Toronto for homeless people called Sanctuary, where they will spend a long weekend gaining exposure to life and ministry there. Then, at the end of the spring semester, this same group will be brought to Ghana, West Africa for a 3-week learning and exposure experience. (Ghana is where I did two summers of field research while doing my Masters at Cornell back in the 90s.)

It's a privilege to become part of The Navigators and to be able to influence and impact the future leaders of our city, of our country! I'm excited to help ad-

vance the Gospel of

Jesus and His Kingdom in this way.

It feels like we're jumping off another cliff, yet we are confident this is where God has called us. There are new challenges ahead of us. One key challenge that stretches our faith is that we are responsible to raise the financial and prayer support for our ministry role with the Navigators. We know (and have experienced) God's faithfulness and are trusting Him in all of these areas.

We would love to have you visit if you are ever in the Ottawa area. Our farm is called *Narrowhaven Farm* (the name comes from C.S. Lewis' Narnia book *Voyage of the Dawn-treader*).

Shalom in Christ,
Stefan Cherry

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(Stefan was our youth pastor before Kendra.)

Therefore, encourage one another: Young adults in conversation with Chris Brnjas

By Nancy Mann

Where can you find great food, a few laughs, serious conversation about life and faith, and the opportunity to see some familiar faces? If you are a young adult, then you want to check out our monthly Supper-at-Six.

On Sunday, Nov 20, our Young Adult Fellowship (YAF) gathered at the church for our monthly pot-luck dinner. We invited Chris Brnjas, a Pastor with *Pastors in Exile* (PiE) to share with us on the topic “Church engagement—relevant or not for today’s young adults?” Chris engaged us in a discussion about the pathways that have led us to Floradale Mennonite Church. We were reminded that we are a diverse group—some of us have been attending Floradale all our lives and others have only arrived here in the past few weeks. We come with our hopes and our dreams for what a church can be, as well as our confidence and our questions about the role of faith in our lives.

Chris challenged us with this verse from I Thessalonians 5: 11

“Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.” He reminded us that in a healthy church, people encourage and support each other in various ways. Chris invited us to reflect on the question: “What are your hopes for Floradale Mennonite Church?” These are some thoughts that people shared:

- People would have a passion for their faith
- We can be a church where new people are welcome
- We can build good relationships with the people who attend here
- We can balance worship and reflection with laughter and fun times
- We can feel comfortable being who we are.... and we can learn about who God is calling us to be
- We can find blessing in being part of an intergenerational community

How would you answer this question? What are *your* hopes for Floradale Mennonite Church?



Alpheus is the new participant in the MCC International Volunteer Exchange Program, working at the Elmira Thrift Shop. He enjoyed trying on this helmet that came into Receiving.



The young adults seem to be having fun! Chris Brnjas is in a striped shirt, near the centre, waving with his elbow on the railing.

Reflections on Current Events: The U.S. Election

Q and A with Peter Ellis

Q: What did you feel when you saw/heard the results of the American election?

A: Initially I felt shock. Disbelief. Sadness. Kendra and I were watching the results on CBC and it was a roller-coaster ride of emotions. I don't invest too much time in U.S. politics or the election but it was hard not to be caught up in the coverage, the results, the commentary of news correspondents, and the general attitude of U.S. citizens who were being interviewed. A few other thoughts that kept popping into my mind were:

1. The many prominent people that predicted a Trump victory, despite what the pre-election poll results were forecasting;
2. This isn't the first time a candidate like Trump got elected as President in the U.S.A. There have been a few other Republican gems that would rival Trump's character and integrity in U.S. history.
3. This is a step back for the recent progress (if you can call it that) on several issues in the U.S.A., namely women's rights, racism, sexism, and immigration.

Q: How do you think the world could/will change as a result?

A: I don't think the world will change much. My experience tells me that often elected leaders are figure-heads for the government machinery that is in place. Look at the experience with Obama—most of his initiatives got quashed or vetoed by the Senate. Obama will likely regret that most of his proposals got denied by the many

“safeguards” that are in place to effect major change. Having said this, it's possible that the U.S. will take a few steps backwards on issues of the environment, immigration, human rights, and global cooperation as Trump moves forward with his presidency.

Q. The theme for MCC's fall conference was "At Peace and Unafraid." How can we personally or as a church respond to this challenge?

A: In the aftermath of the Trump victory, I was reading a story today about how CEO's in the U.S.A. have been trying to alleviate concerns with their staff about diversity in the workplace. These messages ring true for me personally and I think they apply to the church more broadly as well. Starbucks Corp.'s Howard Schultz, who endorsed Clinton, told employees in a letter that “we have a choice in how we treat one another,” “regardless of which candidate they supported.” Apple CEO Tim Cook's message to workers that the tech giant welcomes everyone, “regardless of what they look like, where they come from, how they worship or who they love.” Gary's recent sermon on the familiar Good Samaritan story also rings true at this time—who is our neighbour, and what does the scripture say, and how do you read it? Answer: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind,” and, “Love your neighbor as yourself.” “Do this and you will live.”

-Peter Ellis

Thoughts on the U.S. Election of 2016

By Gary Knarr

Canadians always watch an American presidential election with great interest since we know that the person elected to the office of president will have a major influence on the entire world.

When political leaders come into office, there is always a great deal of uncertainty about what the results of their election will be. It would be an understatement to say that political leaders do not always do everything in office that they promised or implied they would during the election campaign. In some cases this could be a cause for relief rather than displeasure.

The recent election of Donald Trump as president of the U.S. is causing considerable anxiety for many people, and at the same time causing joy, anticipation, and the encouragement of racist activity among some others. President-elect Trump states that he does not understand why he would energize or attract racists, but his election is seen as an indicator of the deep social and racial divide that exists within the United States, and perhaps within North American society as a whole.

After the last candidates' debate, Secretary Hillary Clinton was leading Trump by seven points in the polls. It is probably not coincidental that after suggestions of illegal activity on her part were made public by the F.B.I. and then retracted just days before the election, Clinton's lead in the polls became slight. As the election night unfolded, the slight lead



in the popular vote proved correct, but Clinton lost the electoral vote which decides the outcome of the election. A current recount that is in progress suggests that Clinton's lead in the popular vote was not nearly as slight as it first appeared.

This is the second time in 16 years that a Democrat presidential candidate narrowly won the popular vote but lost the election. Reform of the electoral system is very unlikely since the states with lower populations would not be willing to give up the advantage they enjoy with the present electoral system. In Canada, the last two prime ministers were elected with Parliamentary majorities after winning 39 percent of the popular vote. This would be like the American presidential candidate winning the election and gaining both Houses of Congress—which President-elect Trump now has.

It is impossible to know exactly what motivates people to vote as they do. Journalists have suggested that a widespread fear of terrorism, immigration, Muslims, and loss of industrial jobs that are being outsourced to other countries led almost half of the American voters to support Trump. Certainly the loss of jobs and the economic polarization occurring in North America, along with the declining income and employment opportunities for many people, is cause for great concern. It remains to be seen whether President-elect Trump will be able to successfully change that trend or how his policies will change the economy of the U.S. and the world. Concern for the environment has also increased since the election in light of the president-elect's disbelief in the reality of climate change.

The great surprise of the election results for me were that 42 percent of women voters and 53 percent of white women voters supported Trump. Apparently many women were not as alienated as one might expect from Trump's statements about women and his treatment of women. Economic and ethnic concerns seem to have been greater issues, and many Americans are committed Republicans or Democrats whoever the candidates may be. Trump's opposition to abortion also likely attracted some support. Still, some prominent evangelical Christians and prominent Republicans were careful to disassociate themselves from Trump.

Perhaps in President-elect Trump's case, the book will be different from its cover and the contents of the package different from the packaging that was presented on the campaign trail. His comments on reducing the involvement of the American military throughout the world and having a less confrontational stance toward Russia could contribute to better international relations. His willingness to consider keeping aspects of the health care system that President Obama built is encouraging. His appointment of a noted white supremacist as his top advisor is not so encouraging, although Trump states that he does not believe that his appointee is actually a racist. There have been many questions about what is appearance and what is reality about both presidential candidates.

Donald Trump's campaign spoke to the fear and anger of many Americans who are anxious about their economic future, and regard many people of other ethnic and religious groups a threat. He also represents a dislike of government involvement in peo-

ple's lives and taxation. Probably many agreed with him that it is "smart" to find ways to avoid paying taxes if one can.

Some have suggested that Hillary Clinton may have been more successful if she were not associated with her husband's presidency and President Obama's administration. After an 8-year Democrat presidency, many people felt ready for change, although change does not necessarily equal improvement. The circulation of much false information about Hillary Clinton on social media indicates that many people were eager to believe the worst of her.

Some wonder if many Americans will now move to Canada in the wake of the election. Perhaps some disappointed Americans will move north, but to avoid the influence of the president of the United States one would have to leave the planet and not just cross a border. At this point, we can only wait to see how President-elect Trump's personality and policies will affect his country and the world.

Perhaps the best response to the election came from the defeated candidate Hillary Clinton the morning after the election. Clinton told her supporters, "We owe him [Trump] an open mind and the chance to lead." She also encouraged everyone to continue to work for the equality and well being of all people of all ethnic groups and religions, and then offered a Biblical quotation, "Let us not grow weary of doing good for in good season we shall reap." (Galatians 6:9) This is an important reminder that whoever may govern the nations, Christ calls us to be faithful to His way of peace, fairness and compassion toward all people from "across the street and around the world."

At Peace and Unafraid

By Mary M. Martin

In a strange way the results of the American election and the theme of the MCC fall conference solicited a similar emotional response within me. The MCC theme, “At Peace and Unafraid” was thought-provoking for me; can one be both at peace and unafraid at the same time? I believe that MCC’s peace building program endeavors to make this possible.

About 400 people were registered for the conference held at the Elmira District High School on Nov. 12. Wilma Derkson, author of several books exploring forgiveness was the morning keynote speaker and Issa Ebombolo, founder of children’s Peace Clubs operating in 15 African countries spoke in the afternoon. There were a number of workshops one could participate in after the main address and I chose “Crossing Cultures’ in the morning and “Innovative Peacebuilding Practices” in the afternoon. I came away from the conference with a deep respect for the people who work in peace building and for those who daily live in conflict zones and are denied their basic human rights, but still have hope and faith that change/peace can happen.

The results of the American election left me with a deep sadness and concern. Even though many of the proposed political policies are in considerable conflict with my own, I could accept that for the present, this is the way it is.



What I struggle to accept is what seems to me a shift in values, morals and attitudes. I know there are those who say this is not new and I to a point I agree. However, I also agree with a journalist who wrote, “Civility in politics has been declining for years, both a cause and symptom of a changing culture where anonymous verbal assaults are fired freely across the Internet, and cable TV routinely broadcasts words once banned across the airways. But Donald Trump’s presidential run took name-calling and mockery—things that voters long said they detested in their candidates—and normalized them into a winning political strategy.” How is it that we are willing to accept behaviour by our elected officials in a democratic society that is not tolerated in our schools?

I spoke with three women, who were born in America but who came to Canada following their marriages and all three expressed similar feelings about the results of the elections. They used words like disbelief, shock, concern, grief and sadness.

This past week I spoke to an older woman in New York who also spoke of concern and sadness. For all of us, and I noted we were all grandmothers, our sadness and concern has roots in our concern for our grandchildren and their future.

The serenity prayer talks of accepting the things we cannot change and to change the things we can. I cannot change anything about the election results but what action am I called to make so as to be at peace and unafraid? I know that when I am true to myself and true to God as I understand God I have peace and for now, that’s my starting point.

Responding with love

By Katie Gerber

We, the church, as a body of believers, must take our place and navigate the dark, while increasing the light. The past few months have brought much frustration, anger, confusion and sadness to our southern neighbours, and to us as Canadians living next door. How do we, as Christ followers, live into the call God has placed on our lives amidst the leadership transition from Obama to Trump? And in the society we live in today?

I believe it begins with having faith that God always causes all things to work together for good to those who love Him and who are called according to His purpose (Rom. 8:28). Then, we need to remember that as Christians, we have always lived and will continue to live in a world that is less than perfect. But we have been called to be lights here, in this place... in our schools, places of work and daily conversations.

We have been called to love God, and one another. We read in 1 John 4:7, “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.”

Trump’s election has brought to light the hate that so many people have towards one another, but I believe it’s a call for us to step up as Christians into the responsibilities we have been given, into our ambassadorship to show this hurting world our Jesus.



Trust God, no matter what happens

By Leon Kehl

The night of the U.S. elections I was at Stirling Avenue Mennonite for an event I helped organize. We were bringing together Mennonites with Turkish Muslims who recently fled their homeland because of persecution from their government. So I was tired by the time I got home and after briefly checking the news, went to bed and awoke to learn the final results in the morning.

I was a little surprised that I really didn't have a strong emotional response. Yes I would have preferred a different outcome because I think these results will lead to escalated fear, polarization and uncertainty both in the U.S. and the world. Yet as a Christian how should I view these results? The previous night's stories of great personal suffering perhaps put the election in perspective.

MCC's theme of "At peace and Unafraid" mirror two questions that we sometimes use as part of our Relearning Community huddle. These questions relate to our relationship with God. The first is "Am I living in a state of peace" and the second, "Am I afraid or nervous?"

I have also been studying Ignation Spirituality as part of completing my training in spiritual direction and one of the graces to be sought is the grace of detachment. Detachment means trusting God enough that no matter what happens "God's grace will be enough for me."

So far that feeling of detachment and not living in a state of fear has continued, but I wouldn't say I am at peace with the election results. As events continue to un-

fold, I sometimes find myself fearing the worst. Yet in this period is there not an opportunity for people of all faiths to respond with love and compassion for all, not just those who supported our preferred candidate? Perhaps these results will force people to confront the deep hurt and brokenness in society and not rely on a single leader to fix things. This was a vicious, personal campaign, highlighting the deep divisions in American society. Will these results force us to stare into the abyss in order to come to our senses?

I know in my own life that it is in times of trial that I have grown the most as a Christian. Times of illness, uncertainty, failure and loss are the times I've learned the most. When things are easy, I find it easier to forget to trust in God. I don't wish those times on anyone but know they can lead to growth in others. I remember a saying that there are two things that we shouldn't worry about: Things we can change and things we can't. If we can change something, we should work to change it. If we can't change it, then what is the point in worrying? That won't help either.

So that is how I view the election results. There are many things I can't change so why worry. Yet there are other things that I can have an influence on and should change. How I respond to others who see things differently is something I can control. I also have the ability to influence others and perhaps effect change. Didn't Jesus tell us that if we only had faith as small as a mustard seed that we can move mountains? So I continue to pray for healing and peace in our world and refuse to give in to my fears as I try to follow God's leading to change it for the better.

We need to listen to all sides

By Rob Martin

When I was asked what I thought about the American election, I have to admit after the Brexit vote I wasn't surprised. Travelling through the states regularly I really got a sense that the regular person never resonated with either candidate. The absence of political signage was very noticeable as was the content of message of the two major contestants.

My personal view is that the election became background noise after Bernie Sanders was eliminated. The lasting impressions of the language toward race, gender, slander, entitlement etc will be felt for a long time and will dog Trump with not only the American citizenry but the rest of the world as well. If his policies toward climate change and trade get traction we in Ontario are in for a rough ride and will create more unrest in respect to the government's climate policies and taxation levels in conjunction with our excessive hydro rates.

As a church body we need to listen to all sides of current events as they take place and be prepared for what may come our way. I think that as a community of Christian believers we need to be unafraid to make a distinction between right and wrong and use grey areas to get to those points in the midst of being compassionate and understanding, because if we don't my personal opinion is we may end up making noise without having content, and losing a committed direction for people to hang their hat on.



Reflections on the Presidential Election – Nov. 8, 2016

By Nancy Mann

On November 8, 2016, I was sitting in my sister's basement, watching television as the U.S. election results rolled in. I was certainly surprised and a bit confused by these results. How could the pollsters have been so wrong, I wondered? Even as I am writing these comments, it appears that Hillary Clinton received more of the popular vote than President-elect Donald Trump. (According to the CNN website on Nov 27, Clinton's popular vote exceeded Trump by 1, 917,830.) But the American elections are a complex system where the winner is identified "state by state." Thus we now have Donald Trump as the identified President elect in the United States.

I think it will be interesting to see how a person who has a lot of experience (both successful and unsuccessful experience) in business, but very little experience in politics, will perform in this position. It has also reminded me that, although we are an independent country, the well-being of Canadians depends greatly on what is happening in the country directly to our south.

Now the election is over, and it is time to move from the politics of campaigning to the politics of governing. As Mennonite Christians, we might reflect on how our theology of peace is applicable to this new reality. I give thanks that the transition of power will (likely) occur in a peaceful and orderly fashion. I remember that, in a free country, I have the right to protest against policies or ideas with which I disagree, but I am called

not to vilify individuals. The art of diplomacy is the art of working effectively with people with whom we do not always agree. In domestic and international politics, this is an important form of peacemaking.

Isaiah 32:1 casts a hopeful vision for "a king who will promote fairness and officials who will promote justice." (NET Bible) Let us continue to remember our elected officials in prayer, that they may move us towards this vision. Let us also remember to be mindful and watchful, ready to raise our voices to protect the weak and vulnerable in our society.



Reign of God separate from government

By J. Lester Kehl

My response to the election of Donald Trump was a disappointment, but not a complete surprise. I have followed closely the dialogue in this election, both in our news reporting and in Christian literature from the U.S.A. I read an interesting article in the last month from an Evangelical magazine calling for both candidates to withdraw from this election because they saw both of these candidates as unfit to lead a "Christian Nation." This response reinforced my view that no country is a "Christian Nation." We only have a secular nation with some persons in leadership who may be Christian.

In the Old Testament story, when Israel wanted a king instead of God's prophets as their ruler,

Samuel gave a warning. They would no longer be a "holy nation," but they would be a secular nation of violence with abusive rulers. So we, as Christians, live in a secular nation, but try to live lives directed by the teachings of Christ, as he lived in a secular world. It was a world as violent as our world today. So when I vote, I choose to elect persons who I feel will best reflect my desire for all persons in our country to live in harmony with each other and creation.

So while I was disappointed, I believe we as Christians can live "At Peace and Unafraid." I conclude with a quote from J. Denny Weaver, a Mennonite theologian and professor in the U.S. "The advancement of the reign of God on earth does not depend on actions by the government of the United States." (*The Mennonite*, Oct., 2016)



We need to remember

By Tim Greenwood

CBC radio has a program called the Current, dealing with (as it shows by the title) current events. I was listening to it Wednesday morning during my drive to class, and was interested to hear one of the topics was dealing with the 1939 voyage of the MS St. Louis. This important trip, from Germany to North America, is infamously remembered because of what happened to the passengers on board. You see, the ocean liner was carrying over 900 Jewish refugees out of Germany to a new life (originally in Cuba). Unfortunately, no coun-

try would accept them, and the ship was denied entry at every port it called at, including Canada. With no other option, the ship was forced to turn around and head back to what was, for all of them, a nightmare. Most were rounded up once back in Europe, and sent to concentration camps. Most died in those camps. A few survived, like the woman who was interviewed for this episode.

What I found most striking about the comments was something she and the host ended with. *“If you forget the past, you are doomed to repeat it.”* That classic phrase is often repeated by people warning friends or family about doing something that may have already been done to negative consequences. In this case, that negative consequence was the Holocaust. By turning away desperate refugees, Cuba, America, and Canada sent them to an impossible life and a genocide.

“History repeats itself.” That is another turn of the phrase that people continue to throw at me when they find out I majored in history. And I never really gave it much thought, until now. I usually think that no one would repeat the major mistakes made in history because everyone recognizes the terrible consequences those mistakes had. And yet, history **IS** repeating itself.

The promises of president-elect Trump echo eerily to what happened to the passengers of the St. Louis. A closed border to the hurting refugees that are desperately trying to escape an impossible life. Mennonites play a part in this article, I promise. When I am told the phrase “If you forget the past, you are

doomed to repeat it,” I choose instead to hear a different phrase: “To Remember is to work for peace.” To remember (so we don’t forget the past), is to work for peace (so that this doesn’t happen again). This mantra isn’t just for our stance against war, it applies to any situation in which someone has been hurt in the past, and remembrance is required to keep it from happening again. I encourage Donald Trump to **remember** the passengers of the MS St. Louis, so that as country, it doesn’t happen again.



From bewilderment to empathy

By Dan Draper

I watched the results of the recent U.S. election on CBC and grew increasingly anxious and upset as the night went on. At the time I was bewildered how supposedly rational beings could overlook serious character flaws, and choose to believe in transparently simplistic and wild promises completely lacking in details and planning. I wondered how American Christians who actively promote socially conservative values could vote for someone who is thrice-married, supports LGBT people and is accused of sexual assault, rather

than a monogamous Methodist. Trump showed his lack of familiarity with the Bible when he literally referred to Paul’s second letter to Corinth as “Two Corinthians.” I was incredulous that supposedly rational people would trust someone quantifiably (yes there are numbers to back this up) more lacking in moral fibre and honesty than his alternative.

Perhaps I take this view because I am not frustrated with gridlock in my federal government, nor am I fed to bursting with nostalgic platitudes or hyperbolic demonizing of political rivals. I am not desperate for a change after my town has been hollowed out by a factory closing, or as rising health care and college costs directly eat into my earnings. I am not worried about the people living and working in my country after sneaking inside, nor anxious about when the next slaughter of innocents may occur. With understanding comes empathy and acceptance.

At first I felt upset and bewildered, now I feel more empathy and pity. But it will be Americans, undocumented immigrants, and Syrian refugees that will feel the negative consequences of this election.

Having studied a lot of history, I know humanity’s long sad history of conflict, and am unafraid, because today, more than ever before, the world is mostly at peace. We are living in a time of the least violence within and between nations. Today, violence is turned to less and less to achieve goals. Although it may feel like disaster keeps buffeting, I look back and see times when it was far worse.

Marriages:



Casey Cressman and Bryan Horn were married at Floradale Mennonite Church on June 18, 2016. Editor's note: Our apologies for missing this in the last issue. Neither did we run an engagement photo.



The MennoHomes affordable housing building is going up beside the Woolwich Community Services building on Church Street East. A small group of anonymous donors has launched a Matching Funds Initiative for MennoHomes with the goal of raising \$500,000 before the end of 2016. New donations in support of this housing project will be matched by the group.



Ashley Bauman and Jake Albrecht were married at Floradale Mennonite Church on October 15, 2016.



A service of blessing of the prayer shawl ministry was held during the worship service on Sunday, November 27, the first Sunday of Advent. Ten knitted shawls were on display. Nancy Mann and the knitters put their hands on the shawls during the prayer of blessing. The knitters pictured are: (from left) Kathleen Cober, Florence Jantzi, Melinda Martin, Lena Martin and Fern Metzger.



Floradale Mennonite Church is collecting relief kits for MCC this Christmas season. Can we fill the boxes heaping and overflowing?